

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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3 December 1953

2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: WH Deputy PESUCGLSS

SUBJECT : Individual PP Asset Assessment: LIONIZER

1. Background:

In November 1951 the []

[] initiated support of a small group of militant Guatemalan exiles. This group, later developed into LIONIZER, shared office space [] with [] until the summer of 1952 at which time, as a result of personality frictions, separate offices were established. LIONIZER has been most active in PW, publishing and distributing a periodic bulletin, anti-Communist and anti-government comic books and variegated posters and handbills. Membership has remained small.

2. Key Personnel:

The principal Guatemalan agent is LIBETHENITE-4. For detailed true name information see agent file, Mexico desk, WH. He is [] anti-Communist anti-government and pro-U.S. [] violently

[] His character is good, by Central American standards, and in operation he has proven trustworthy though somewhat lacking in initiative. Prior to his exile from Guatemala he served as an [] and for a time as [] In these posts he acquitted himself with reasonable success and is reputed to have acquired some means through graft. As an exiled business man he has shown limited capability. He associates himself primarily with other exiled Guatemalans and sympathetic foreigners. LIBETHENITE-4 has been operationally cleared. His security habits are fair.

3. Modus Operandi:

The channel of policy guidance is from headquarters to field station [] to the principal agent. Many detailed ideas and plans are developed at field station level and passed through [] to the group, which handles actual preparation of copy and layouts. Printing is jobbed commercially. The bulletin (See copy attached) is now being distributed biweekly by direct mail to approximately 400 newspapers and 1000 selected individuals throughout Latin America. Some clandestine bulk shipments of the bulletin into Guatemala have been reported, concurrent

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with bulk shipment of other propaganda. The efficiency of this distribution requires further investigation.

4. Character of Themes:

Generally, themes are strongly anti-Communist and anti-government in character. Specifically, attacks are launched against Communist tyranny, dishonesty in government, exploitation of labor, criminal violence on the part of government and pro-government leaders and reprints of anti-Communist articles from other publications. Leaflet cartoons and comic books feature similar themes. LIONIZER's production has been criticized by discriminating anti-government Guatemalans for verbosity and for crude and obvious falsehood, plainly discernable to the reader. Efforts are now being made to eliminate this type of error.

5. Target Audience:

The target audience is variegated with primary emphasis laid on arousing public opinion within Guatemala among all classes and among the literate classes in other Latin American countries. A copy of the bulletin mailing list is attached.

The medium is considered to be having a limited effect. Considerable doubt exists as to the adequacy of distribution. One Guatemalan priest has stated that the clergy are avid readers of the bulletin and pass on its message verbally. LIONIZER production is not in appropriate to the target but would benefit by improved style, greater veracity, and a more positive outlook.

6. Relation to Other Media:

Although generally in accord with the anti-Communist objectives of other media LIONIZER requires improved control and coordination. As an example, while Colonel Francisco ARANA is generally considered to be a martyr assassinated by the Communists, LIONIZER, on one occasion pilloried him as a traitor.

7. Overt or Covert Support of Medium:

LIONIZER is ostensibly supported by voluntary contribution from Guatemalans, other Latin Americans, Europeans and Americans of anti-Communist orientation. Legitimate contributions have been received and sources of funds may be backstopped by documentation. Funding is through Propect [] and provides payment for office rent, furniture, supplies, printing costs, smuggling, and distribution costs, all totalling approximately [] monthly. LIBETHENITE-4 receives [] per month.

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8. Control of Medium:

Control is by [] through PP Operations Officer, through [] to the principal agent. [] in the past he has proven intelligent, diligent, and ambitious but recent indications are that he has become highly insecure. For personnel data see desk agent file, WH, []

9. Security Status:

The principal agent is operationally cleared. [] however, has become insecure through indiscretion and the strong possibility exists that members of the original sponsor, [] may assume U.S. support. Ex-President of LIONIZER, [] ousted by his associates for ineffectiveness, has evinced no tendency to sabotage the group. He is technically unwitting of U.S. interest. The possibility of penetration by Guatemalan government agents must also be given consideration.

10. Summary:

LIONIZER is an established and recognized voice for the anti-Communist Guatemalan opposition and as such has basic utility. It must, however, be considered of doubtful security and in the future may lend itself more to diversion and deception than to straightforward propaganda. Utilization along these lines is recommended.

Attachment: 1 Bulletin

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ATTACHMENT No. 1 to PP Assessment of LIONIZER (Mexico)

Paragraph 2 (Key Personnel)

a. []

b. Home address: Latest available (Sept 1950) []
Apt. 13, [] tenant, no telephone known.

c. Age 57, Apparent age 53 (by interpolation), Height 5' 9", eyes grey, Face - shape triangular, Complexion fair, Posture erect, Weight about 150 (1950), Teeth fair, Hair black with much grey, Scars none known, Build slight, General appearance neat and erect.

d. In 1950 he ran a small [] business. No address or telephone number available.